REMARKS

The status of the application is as follows. Claims 13-20 and 22-26 remain in the application. In the outstanding Office Action all of the claims were rejected under Section 112. Further, all of the claims were rejected under Section 102 or Section 103 based on the Wustman reference (US2005/0161439) and were provisionally rejected based on the ground of obviousness-type double patenting. To expedite allowance, the provisional rejection is overcome based on the terminal disclaimer submitted herewith. Claim 14 is amended to correct an error of an apparent nature.

For reasons discussed below the rejections under Section 112 are overcome. Further, it is submitted that the art rejections were presented because the rejections under Section 112 prevented the Examiner from a proper comparison of the claim limitations and the prior art. Now that the rejections under Section 112 are clearly overcome, the art rejections can no longer stand.

The basis for the rejections under Section 112 was that the Examiner contended that the very wording used to distinguish over the prior art is not supported by the specification. This cannot be. That is, in the Final Office Action mailed 17 October 2007 the Examiner rejected claim 13 on the following basis:

> "The limitation of adding an oxygen donor to the salt bath are [sic] met since Wustman teaches an aqueous caustic solution and water inherently serves as an oxygen donor."

Thus the Examiner read claim 13 on the prior art because the claim recited a salt bath. The Examiner correctly noted that the claimed salt bath could be an aqueous salt bath wherein water inherently serves as an oxygen donor. Accordingly, the Examiner has acknowledged an inherent feature of some salt baths, i.e., that some salt baths may contain water which is an oxygen donor. Applicants addressed the Examiner's rejection by acknowledging in the claim that, to the extent any oxygen donor may already be intrinsically present in the claimed molten bath, an additional oxygen donor was added. However, to avoid further argument over what is inherently present and what is added to the bath, claim 13 has now been amended to more clearly distinguish over the prior art. Applicants now require:

> "adding a sufficient amount of an oxygen donor, taken from the group consisting of oxygen, sodium oxide and other oxides ..."

The above recitation both satisfies the requirements under Section 112 and assures that the claimed combination is both distinct and non-obvious over the Wustman reference. This is because, as explained by the Examiner, the Wustman reference "teaches an aqueous caustic solution and water inherently serves as an oxygen donor." See page 4 of the outstanding Office Action.

The art rejections based on Wustman are also deficient because the Examiner has cited paragraph [0076] of the reference with regard to applicants' recited bonding layer of composition MCrAlY. The citation does not disclose such and the Office Action (see page 4) only refers to an "aluminide bond coating" on a superalloy. It is urged that the subject matter of claim 13 and each of the dependent claims is distinct and non-obvious over the prior art. Other distinctions in support of allowability have already been made of record in the prior amendment filed under Rule 116.

Conclusion

Applicants have amended the claims and provided explanation as to why the application is now in condition for allowance. All of the Section 112 concerns and all of the prior art issues have been fully addressed. For all of the reasons provided, the claims in this application are allowable. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any appropriate fees due in connection with this paper, including the fees specified in 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 (c), 1.17(a)(1) and 1.20(d), or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 19-2179.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: ___5/23/08___

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Enclosure: Terminal Disclaimer